

Swarthmore Lecture

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# The Missionary Spirit

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Theology

Swarthmore Lecture

# The Missionary Spirit and the Present Opportunity

marked throughout

BY

HENRY T. HODGKIN, M.A., M.B.

*Secretary of the Friends' Foreign Mission Association  
Sometime Missionary in West China*

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him  
that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace."

ISA. lli. 7.

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## Preface

The Swarthmore Lectureship was established by the Woodbrooke Extension Committee, at a meeting held December 9th, 1907: the minute of the Committee providing for "an annual lecture on some subject relating to the Message and Work of the Society of Friends." The name "Swarthmore" was chosen in memory of the home of Margaret Fox, which was always open to the earnest seeker after Truth, and from which loving words of sympathy and substantial material help were sent to fellow-workers.

The Lectureship has a two-fold purpose: first, to interpret further to the members of the Society of Friends their Message and Mission; and, secondly, to bring before the public the spirit, the aims and the fundamental principles of the Friends.

The previous lectures of the series have been as follows:—

1908: "Quakerism a Religion of Life," by  
Rufus M. Jones, M.A., D.Litt., of  
Haverford College, Pa.

## Preface

- 1909 : " Spiritual Guidance in the Experience  
of the Society of Friends," by  
William Charles Braithwaite, B.A.,  
LL.B.
- 1910 : " The Communion of Life," by Joan  
Mary Fry.
- 1911 : " Human Progress and the Inward  
Light," by Thomas Hodgkin, D.C.L.
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Society of Friends," by Joshua  
Rowntree.
- 1914 : " The Historic and the Inward Christ,"  
by Edward Grubb, M.A.
- 1915 : " The Quest for Truth," by Silvanus  
P. Thompson, F.R.S.

The above lectures have been delivered on  
the evening preceding the assembly of the  
Friends' Yearly Meeting in each year.

## Foreword

In the following pages I have tried to express some of the thoughts that seem to me to demand expression at the present time. The occasion of the delivery of this lecture has determined the emphasis upon the Quaker contribution. I am, in fact, very far from considering that the Society of Friends has any monopoly in the aspects of truth here discussed. It is only, however, as each group of Christians seeks to state in word and life the truth which has been committed to them, that we shall reach out together into the larger knowledge of God, and the fuller life in Him that all earnest seekers desire. In this spirit I trust that what is here put down may be of value to some outside the borders of our own small Society.

H.T.H.

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# The Missionary Spirit and the Present Opportunity

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## I.—THE MISSIONARY SPIRIT

WE live in an age when vast numbers of our fellow-men are engaged in the task of trying to persuade or compel others to accept their own faith, either in regard to some particular question or in regard to life as a whole. Probably most of those who read these words are more or less consciously engaged in some such effort.

Modern business is centred round this problem. The salesman, the commercial traveller, the clever advertisement, are all part of a carefully organised scheme for producing in the mind of the buyer faith in the produce offered to the public. Business success largely depends on the number of persons in whom this faith is created. From the point of view of immediate returns it is often assumed that the question as to whether the faith is justified or not is relatively unimportant, though it is obviously a matter of chief moment in the long run.

Our educational systems unite in this common

endeavour. The teacher must awaken faith in himself on the part of the pupil, and, having done so, communicate to him his own faith in certain propositions, true or false. His success as a teacher has frequently been estimated more on the power he has of communicating his faith than on the correctness of the facts taught. In the long run, again, success really depends on the ultimate truth of that which is imparted, but this is not by any means always apparent. Modern education certainly tries to substitute, wherever possible, demonstration to the reason of the student for the *ipse dixit* of the teacher. But there are whole ranges of knowledge in regard to which this cannot be accomplished, at least in the early stages of education ; and in any case faith in the teacher is an essential element in leading the child even towards the discovery of truth for himself.

At the moment of writing, a large proportion of the entire human race is involved in what has been called a struggle of ideas. Whether the effort be to establish German Kultur or British Justice, or any other principle regarded by the combatant peoples as "vital," it is generally assumed that some great ideal of human life is at stake, and, therefore, I suppose, that it is

possible to propagate or establish faith in that ideal by *force majeure*. It is within the knowledge of all of us that many men have entered into this conflict with the missionary spirit. They believe there is some principle "worth fighting for." It would therefore follow that the principle will be held by a larger number of persons as a result of victory, or would be held by a smaller number of persons as a result of defeat, which amounts to the same thing. If it be true that success in arms does quicken faith in the principles for which the victor is contending, we may say again that the world gives its immediate rewards to those who create their faith in the hearts of others, whether that faith be false or true. The ultimate judgment of the race may, in all these matters, reverse the verdict; but the plaintiff wins to-day by virtue of his power to communicate his faith to the defendant, not by virtue of the inherent trustworthiness of his ideal.

Even a cursory glance at modern life, then, reveals the fact that a large number of persons are engaged, in one way or another, in the attempt to communicate their faith to others, and the further fact that there are grave

dangers inherent in the process. The history of the propagation of religious ideas does not diminish our sense of the danger, while it illustrates still further the prevalence of the endeavour, and the variety of the methods employed. Each of the above illustrations may be taken as typical of a certain method, and each method has been employed in religious propaganda.

Whatever their opinions may be as to the possibility of a successful war establishing faith in certain principles of human government, it is granted by most people to-day that religion ought not to be communicated by methods of compulsion or violence. The classic illustration of this method in the religious history of the race is the spread of Mohammedanism. No one can doubt the immediate success of the method. "One hundred years after Mohammed's death his followers were masters of an empire greater than Rome at the zenith of her power. They were building mosques in China, in Spain, in Persia, and in Southern India."<sup>1</sup>

This empire was not simply an empire ruled

<sup>1</sup> "Islam, a Challenge to Faith," by Dr. S. M. Zwemer, p. 55.

by Moslems, it largely consisted of Moslems. Many thousands who would not submit to the prophet were slain. The ascendancy of Islam was established at the point of the sword, and seemed likely to extend to the whole of Europe, when it was checked by Charles Martel's victory at Tours in 732. It is not possible for me here to consider all the complex factors that entered into the success of the Mohammedan movement. All I want to point out is that a vast influence was spread throughout a large part of the world largely by violent means, that millions of people to-day hold certain ideas as a result of violent methods used in the past, and that it is, nevertheless, a fact that none of us would be disposed to quote this as an example to be followed in seeking to spread the truth. The actual failure of this method may, perhaps, be seen in the mental stultification and the moral degradation unfortunately characteristic of Moslem lands to-day. The word Islam, "submission," stands for that attitude of mind and spirit which is the inevitable result of propagating ideas by compulsion. Missionary fervour harnessed to such a method does not make for the liberating of the human spirit and the true progress of the race.

Nor have we to look outside the records of our own religion to discover notable examples of the failure of this method. The long, sad story of the Inquisition stands for all time as a witness to the ultimate failure of violence and cruelty, even when used in the interests of truth. The truth itself becomes degraded in the process, its propagators become debased, and the persecuted may even emerge triumphant. Compare the Spain of to-day with Holland, and consider what the verdict of history has been upon the method of the Inquisition. Over against all such efforts to establish the kingdom of ideas by force we hear the words of One who said, "My Kingdom is not of this world, else would my servants fight."

The spread of religious ideas in the present may be said to have very little relation to the use of armed force or methods of physical compulsion. There can be no doubt, however, that it is still very largely true that the virtual compulsion of superior knowledge or authority enters into much missionary activity. The vicar and squire who are the only men of education in the parish may have yielded their pre-eminence in many of our own country districts, but how often do we still find the

ignorant countryman accepting his religious and political ideas from persons whose chief claim to be heard is a certain ill-defined authority. It may be perfectly right and natural, as in the case of the education of small children, that much should be taken on authority in the first place: the individuals concerned may have an expert knowledge that entitles them to be heard with respect, or even to be fully believed. But the method of bringing others to accept our faith which rests upon mere authority has in it certain elements of weakness and danger.

This danger is evident in our foreign missionary efforts to-day. The missionary represents a civilisation generally far in advance of that of the people to whom he goes. He can do things which, to them, are little, if anything, short of the miraculous. Behind him, in the eyes of the people, are the armies of mighty states, the power of great commercial enterprises, the skill of scientists and engineers. His unwitting authority is immense. In some cases, the missionary belongs to the ruling or the predominant race: he appears almost as a different order of being. His faith may be accepted simply because he is seen to be so much wiser in

other things, or felt to be so much mightier. Our Lord seems to have been peculiarly sensitive to this danger also. He turned away from the temptation to do startling things. He would not give a sign to the Pharisees or to Herod. The authentication of His message was found in the words themselves and in the life that supported them. "He spake as one having authority." "Never spake man like this man."

It is true to-day not only that many people hold certain ideas because of military conquests in the past, but also that great masses of our fellow men have never even attempted to form an independent judgment on important questions because they have accepted the authority of some person, or body of persons. In matters of scientific knowledge, this is an essential condition of the thought life of all of us. Our independent judgment can only be exercised in determining whom to believe, because we cannot devote ourselves to a minute examination of all the data. But in matters of religious faith the question is very different. Religion is essentially a personal relationship, and, when once the attempt is made to propagate it by the appeal to authority, it very soon degenerates

either into a lifeless creed or into a mere superstition.

It is only when we go to other men and women as to rational beings on an equality with ourselves, and seek to communicate our faith by appealing to their reason and wills that we are on the really safe path. The man who is terrorised by force is actually being treated like an animal. The man who is overawed by authority is being treated like a child. The one may be overcome by fear and made into an obedient slave. The other may be impressed by his own ignorance and become the ready pupil. Either, it is true, may ultimately be made, by other methods, into an equal partner. The fact remains, however, that these methods of propagating ideas among rational beings hold within themselves the seeds of ultimate failure.

I have referred to the fact that the apparent success of the missionary bears no necessary relation to the truth of his message. False ideas have often spread with lightning rapidity through large sections of the people. Students of psychology are familiar with the many cases of mass movements and mental contagion. The story of the South Sea Bubble is no isolated event in history; it is a type of one of the

commonest of phenomena. In considering these cases we are almost alarmed to find that falsehood seems to gain ground more rapidly than truth. Nearly every case that comes to mind is associated with some false idea. The human spirit seems to be peculiarly susceptible to being deceived in mass. What no sane man would dream of believing if left to himself quietly to think it over, tens of thousands of otherwise reasonable people will believe under the influence of some panic, or when brought under the power of a common impulse.

These considerations serve further to illustrate the danger of any method of propaganda that depends upon the ideas either of compulsion or authority, and, by contrast, the value of the third method in order to guard against these dangers, and to preserve the truth of the message even in the hour of its success. Everything that makes for the development of strong personality is a bulwark against the prevalence of false ideas. Independent thinking should be called out by the methods of propaganda, and this alone gives the promise of true success.

The study of the methods employed in the propagation of ideas, of the spirit animating

those engaged in such work, of their motives and the conditions of their success or failure, is far too large a subject to be handled in the course of one lecture. The whole range of human history would have to be brought under review to deal with it adequately. I must, therefore at this point, more exactly define the ground I wish to cover.

I shall, then, confine myself to the missionary spirit in a sense shortly to be defined. I shall attempt to bring out the essential elements in this spirit by a brief examination into the psychology of the missionary, and by some illustrations of its manifestation in the history of the Christian Church. I propose, then, further to consider the missionary spirit as manifested in the spread of Christian ideas, dealing with the distinctive elements in the psychology of the Christian missionary. This will lead up naturally to a discussion of the present situation, and the missionary possibilities that open up before the Christian Church to-day.

While we have hitherto been thinking of many different ways in which persons are engaged in the spreading of their faith, our thoughts have centred particularly on religious propaganda.

Before dealing exclusively with this subject, let us seek to discover what is common to all who possess the missionary spirit. In order to do so, it is needful first to define more exactly what we mean by this term. Not all who are engaged in the work of propagating ideas can truly be called "missionaries." Nor can we say that all who are technically missionaries, *i.e.*, persons sent with a definite commission, have the missionary spirit. There are many people who pursue a missionary calling but have little, if any, of the missionary spirit. The commercial traveller, sent by his employer to push his goods, may be spoken of as a missionary. He may be successful in putting his goods on the market by communicating his faith in them to his customers. He cannot, however, be said to have the missionary spirit unless he has a certain contagious enthusiasm, a deep conviction of the value of his goods, and an earnest wish, not only for reasons of personal profit, to secure as wide a distribution as possible for them. The teacher who laboriously fulfils his daily task may succeed in implanting many new ideas in his pupil's minds, but may wholly lack that power to create eagerness and joy in others that is characteristic of the missionary spirit

at its best. To the Christian missionary also come periods of dryness of soul, when, though he may leave undone no part of his missionary duty, the zest and passion of the early days are lost in the monotony of uninspired routine. He is pursuing the missionary calling, but he has lost the missionary spirit.

The missionary spirit, then, as I understand it, is a passion to spread some knowledge that is possessed, it is a welling up within the soul of a desire to communicate something which has proved to be of value to oneself, it is a seeking out for others who may become sharers of what we have come to regard as good news. Why should men and women be possessed by this spirit? How is it that some have it in large measure, while others seem scarcely able to understand its existence? What, in fact, is its psychological basis?

A study of missionary biography, as well as a knowledge of those who are engaged in work of this character, leads first to a consideration of the relation of *loyalty* to the missionary spirit. The propagandist is typically a loyal man. He may be loyal to a person, to a business house, to a Church, to a State, or to a principle. His loyalty expresses itself in a desire

to win other loyal servants to the person, to procure custom for his employer, to secure adherents to his Church, to spread the influence of his state, or the principle to which he stands committed. The loyal man shows a singleness of purpose, a ruling passion to which all his activities and interests become subservient. It is just such qualities that go to the making of a successful missionary.

In many cases the Christian missionary dates his missionary interest from his full acceptance of the command of our Lord to "go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature," or from an understanding of the essentially missionary character of His religion. If asked why he is a missionary, he will tell you that obedience to his Master's direct command and evident desire is the one thing that has driven him into the active service of the Church. From this it might easily be assumed that loyalty is really the fundamental element in the missionary spirit. I believe, however, that we must look more deeply into the matter if we are to obtain a right answer.

It is evident that there are two very different states of mind which may be covered by the term "loyalty." There is the dogged service

of the slave, or the man who regards himself as a debtor, and is ready to render any service, however onerous or menial, out of a sense of duty. There is the totally different condition of one who freely gives out of love and admiration and reverence. The first kind of loyalty may be secured by either of the two first methods already referred to—by compulsion or by authority. The second kind of loyalty may, indeed, be found in those who have been coerced or overawed, but it only finds its perfect expression in those who are won by an appeal to their whole personality that calls out the full response of an awakened soul. You cannot expect, nor will you find, the missionary spirit in the first class of persons, even though their loyalty be unquestioned. Even in regard to the second class, it can scarcely be maintained that the missionary spirit is an invariable manifestation. While it is correct to say that every true missionary is loyal, it is not equally true that every loyal person (even in the fuller sense) has the missionary spirit. There are always a great many more loyal followers of any cause than active propagandists. Even though, in the early stages, nearly every follower may be a missionary, there sooner or later comes a time

when this ceases to be true, and the missionary becomes the exception rather than the rule. And this may happen even though there is still a high level of loyalty to the cause. We are, therefore, bound to admit that loyalty is not sufficient alone to explain the existence of the missionary spirit.

The next element in the missionary spirit that naturally occurs to the mind is an *intensity of conviction* by which the whole personality is dominated. The missionary is a man who believes whole-heartedly in something or someone. If he has doubts or even a half-hearted faith in his cause, he will have little or no effect in communicating his faith to others. Loyalty is an attitude of the will: intense conviction is an attitude of the mind. They are frequently, but by no means always, combined. Deep conviction may not issue in loyal service to the cause. Motives of self-interest or expediency may easily lead a deeply convinced person into compromise, or even to actual abandonment of the cause. On the other hand, the utmost loyalty may be found in persons who have very little mental grasp of the principles to which they are loyal, and who, if confronted with strong arguments, will surrender their position

almost without a struggle. It is sufficiently clear that deep conviction alone cannot make a missionary, but a combination of these two elements will certainly go far towards the production of the true missionary spirit. I do not think, however, that we have yet put our finger upon the most vital element without which the others may still be present, and yet fail to produce this particular result.

This vital element I find in the *consciousness of a fresh discovery*. I have referred to the striking fact, so clearly illustrated in our Quaker history, that while, in the early days of a movement, every disciple may be a missionary, the stage soon follows when the missionary is the exception. Loyalty and deep conviction may continue, but the missionary spirit has departed. Is not the early phenomenon most fully explained by the extraordinary psychological effect of a new discovery, and the latter falling away by the absence of this experience? Be it remembered that I am not, at the moment, attempting to deal with the special characteristics of the religious or Christian missionary spirit. Wherever you find persons who have the passion to create in others a like faith to their own, I believe that you will find that some

fresh discovery of truth, or what they regard as truth, has been made by them. On the other hand, there is nothing more destructive to the missionary spirit than the *blasé* attitude of mind to which nothing is new. Traditionalism and formalism kill the missionary spirit. When, on the other hand, the mind is suddenly awakened by a new discovery, the whole of life is transformed. The world seems new, unsuspected values are discovered both in one's environment and in oneself. Something has happened which demands expression. Such a discovery is, indeed, the foundation both of loyalty and of deep conviction, and of that kind of loyalty and conviction that produces the missionary spirit. The discovery of a principle is not simply the intellectual knowledge of its existence. True discovery means that something in myself responds to something outside myself. There is an inner recognition of fitness. That which I find finds me. Professor Gwatkin has expressed this in regard to the great religious discovery of God in the following striking passage :—

“ Revelation or discovery is neither in God's giving nor in man's receiving, but in the two together. It is neither in God's truth without, nor in God's image within, but in the meeting of the two. It comes to pass

whenever God's image within recognises God's truth without. No matter so far about the kind of truth. Be it physical, mental or spiritual: in all cases revelation and discovery go together. The divine and the human are always both implied; and we can no more have the one without the other than we can have the north without the south, or a circle without a centre."<sup>1</sup>

As I am now considering the missionary spirit simply on its subjective side, I shall leave over the fuller discussion of these words. I quote them now as illustrating the double nature of any true discovery. Quite apart from the thing discovered, there is an awakening of some hidden potentiality within the soul. This acts like a ferment stimulating the whole personality. To change the metaphor, it is like the touching of a spring releasing pent-up energies, which find expression in the effort to propagate the new idea. This stimulus is, in my opinion, the most distinctive feature in evoking the missionary spirit. Every great missionary movement has sprung out of the sense of fresh discovery. Every great missionary has been first a discoverer.

We see the simplest exhibition of the missionary spirit in the little child. He instinctively seeks to communicate any new knowledge that he acquires. Having been ignorant of the fact

<sup>1</sup> *The Knowledge of God*, Vol. I., p. 156.

until the moment of enlightenment, his natural tendency is to assume a similar ignorance on the part of others. To him is given the joy of discovery, and he wishes at once to share his joy with everyone he meets. Our Lord assigns the chief place in His Kingdom to the child, and this for many reasons. One, surely, and not the least significant, is the attitude of mind that is always on the look-out for fresh discoveries. Mr. Chesterton calls the determinist a slave "because he is not allowed to believe in fairies." The sons of God are like boys and girls always making fresh discoveries, and always brimming over with enthusiasm to introduce others to their own fairylands. As we grow older, the dull cloud of custom settles upon us ; our lives sink into routine ; we expect less and therefore we get less. We need to be born again into the child spirit, to press out into the unknown, always eager to discover. Thus shall we find the hidden riches, thus there will be born in us the missionary spirit. Let us recall Wordsworth's apostrophe to the little child eager to imitate the man and bind the fetters on his venturesome soul.

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie  
Thy soul's immensity ;  
Thou best Philosopher, who yet dost keep

Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind,  
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,  
Haunted for ever by the eternal mind—

Mighty Prophet ! Seer blest !

On whom those truths do rest,  
Which we are toiling all our lives to find,  
In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave :  
Thou, over whom that immortality  
Broods like the day, a master o'er a slave,  
A presence which is not to be put by ;  
Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might  
Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,  
Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke  
The years to bring the inevitable yoke,  
Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife ?  
Full soon thy soul shall have her earthly freight,  
And custom lie upon thee with a weight,  
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life !

That greatest of all discoveries—the discovery of God—is described as a new birth. We start out again with the “ heaven-born freedom ” of the little child, we learn to tread “ the eternal deep,” and we become missionaries, not because we are convinced we ought to be, but simply because we cannot help it. This joyous life of adventurous discovery breaks the bonds of custom. The wise men look on and say : “ They are filled with new wine.” “ Thy much learning hath made thee mad.” It seems such an absurd manifestation in this hard old world of ours. But those who have the missionary spirit have found their fairyland, and they cannot keep it to themselves. They

step out into it unafraid, and they call others to follow. And every one who has the courage to do so proves how wise was one of old who said : " A little child shall lead them."

But I am in danger of digressing. The relation of this sense of fresh discovery to the missionary spirit may be further illustrated by considering how it operates in connection with the two factors already mentioned. Loyalty to an individual is only possible to one who has discovered that person to whom his soul goes out as to a friend, a leader or a saviour. The passionate loyalty of the new convert is well known to us all. Such enthusiasm calls forth loyalty and devotion in others. It is further maintained by fresh discoveries of the hidden depths in the person loved. In the same way, deep conviction is most contagious when the principle or idea has but recently found an entrance into the mind, or as we continually discover fresh applications of it. There is a strong tendency, when a new discovery is made, to do like the woman in the parable who " when she hath found it, calleth together her neighbours and friends, saying, ' Rejoice with me.' "

The extent to which the missionary spirit takes possession of the discoverer will, no doubt,

depend on the nature of the discovery, and to this I shall return shortly. It also depends on the temperament of the individual, on the circumstances in which he may be placed, and so forth. Its springs, however, are found in the keen sense of discovery, and of recent discovery. This does not, however, stand alone. Not only are the two elements of loyalty and deep conviction almost invariably associated with it. There is also a certain attitude towards other people without which we do not find the missionary spirit. I have hitherto dealt only with the relation of the mind and will towards the person, community or principle on behalf of whom or which the missionary labours. An element perhaps not less important is his relation to persons in whom he seeks to create faith. These he regards not merely as pawns in a game, or sources of profit. They are essentially persons with similar needs to his own, and with a similarity of nature. Otherwise they could have no interest in his message. You cannot think of a man becoming a missionary to monkeys. We must predicate a common nature with some degree of common interests, hopes and fears. In the case of the Christian missionary we may make this point

clear by saying that he is one who discovers not only God but also his fellow-man. It is this double discovery that sends him forth with a burning message. The modern foreign missionary movement is the direct outcome of this second discovery following on the first. As the world opened out to merchant and explorer, the Church gradually awoke to the presence in it of men with like passions to her own, for whom also Christ had died. It was this discovery that sent out Carey, Morrison, and many another. They had found among the heathen their fellow-men.

It is necessary, further, to possess a certain genuine benevolent interest in those to whom you go. The missionary motive may be very mixed, but in every case that is worthy of the name there must be some element of positive goodwill. Pure self-interest, regardless of the good of others, cannot give rise to that kind of enthusiasm we agreed to regard as characteristic of the missionary spirit. This goodwill, in the case of the Christian missionary, cannot be limited to certain persons or nations. Its essential nature carries it beyond the limits of ordinary benevolence. It is seized with the passion to "go on unto Spain," or to any other

remote corner of the world. There is no stopping the men who are thus possessed.

We may now consider, as illustrating these thoughts, the manifestation of the missionary spirit in certain specific cases. I shall confine my attention henceforth to the Christian missionary in the widest sense of that term. We are therefore, dealing with loyalty to Jesus Christ as Lord and Master, with a conviction of the central truth of His Gospel, with the discovery of God as manifested in His Son, and as reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, and with the positive love to all men that flows from this experience, and from the recognition of unity with them in the family of God.

No period in the history of the Christian Church can compare with the early days in widespread missionary activity. No study of missions is adequate without an examination of this period. I am anxious, however, to limit myself severely in dealing with this, as with other examples. Our study is not the missionary campaign of the Church, its methods, the difficulties to be overcome, its success or failure. Nor are we concerned with the

missionary's message, or with his actual work, save in so far as they help to show the spirit that animates him, and that makes him a missionary. I shall simply try to answer the question, "What has been, in each case, the operative factor in creating the missionary spirit?" In doing so it is clear that reference must be made to the outstanding missionary figures in whom we see the missionary spirit incarnated. I shall not, however, attempt to deal with the extremely important question of the missionary spirit as we see it in our Lord Himself, both because the subject is so vast, and also because we are on such difficult ground when we attempt to discuss the inner workings of His mind, and to draw inferences therefrom.

When Christ came into the world, genuine religion was at a low ebb. The religious leaders of the time were punctilious in every minor detail of the law. They would compass land and sea to make one proselyte. There was not lacking a certain religious fervour. But it is evident that, for the mass of the people, the elaborate ritual of Judaism, and the minor matters of the law, served to keep God at a distance. He was approached but once in the year when the High Priest entered the Holy

of Holies, and even then only after ceremonials that emphasised His unapproachableness. To lead a life well pleasing to God was scarcely possible to any who did not devote their whole time to the endeavour. While there undoubtedly were some who lived the simple life of child-like faith in God,<sup>1</sup> to the average person it must have appeared quite hopeless to obey all the tedious precepts of the Talmudic traditions. God was fenced round with such an array of prohibitions as to drive one to despair. To please God was to enter upon a path beset with difficulties, and even if the attempt were made to walk along it, He was very far removed. No comforting sense of His presence could sustain one in the long endeavour after goodness.

Our Lord at once pierced through all this crust of tradition and prohibition. To Him the most immediate and pressing reality in the world was God. He was not fenced off from human life, but quite startlingly near, clothing the lilies and watching the sparrows, and counting the hairs of our head. The whole paraphernalia of religion that pushed Him away tumbled down like a house of cards at the touch of One

<sup>1</sup> See *e.g.*, Luke ii. 25-38.

who bade us pray "Our Father." Our Lord not only had this constant assurance of the nearness of the Father Himself. He created it in His followers. For them the great discovery came through their contact with Him. They did not make it all at once, and it was only when the Holy Spirit came upon them that they were fully possessed with the missionary spirit. They found then that the crucified Jesus was the Messiah, that He was still alive, that He had come to bring all men into that same experience of God that He possessed. This experience and conviction changed their whole outlook upon life. It brought to a head, as it were, all that Christ had been seeking to teach them. It opened to them the doors of direct access to God. In the passage from the prophet Joel quoted by Peter on that memorable day, the culminating sentence is, "that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Henceforth, as the writer to the Hebrews sees, they should not "teach every man his fellow-citizen and every man his brother saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest of them." It was not only the discovery that God could be known to all that was so revolutionary a fact to the apostles. It

was the actual discovery for themselves of God as their Father. The disciples had companied with Jesus, and they had beheld in Him "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father." They discovered God in the person of One whom they could handle and speak with. That discovery was ratified to them by His resurrection, and by the inward experience of His abiding presence. To Paul, that greatest of all missionaries, the experience was one of immediate personal touch. "It was," he says, "the good pleasure of God to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles." It was this momentous discovery that transformed him into a missionary. His passionate nature had been directed towards the destruction of what he considered evil; it was now turned into new channels, seeking to lead others into a like discovery. He felt the pressure of a necessity that he could scarcely express: "Woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel."

Let us assume, though it has recently been questioned, that the early disciples had our Lord's explicit command to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." I do not for a moment undervalue that command both for them and for the later ages to

whom it has come as a reminder of the world-embracing sweep of the good news. Loyalty to their Master would naturally lead them to wish to carry out His injunctions. But I do not find in this command an adequate stimulus to the intense missionary enthusiasm of the early Church. Even after it had been given, Peter found it very hard to believe that the Gentiles were to be included, and the traditional Jewish attitude towards them was like a hard shell, which nothing but a living principle of great power was sufficient to burst through. This living principle was the actual meeting of divine and human spirits; the discovery of God in Christ is the only dynamic sufficient to explain the outburst of new life in the young Church. It upset the most cherished convictions: it transformed the most hide-bound traditionalists: it was far too big a thing to be contained within the old skins of Judaism. The missionary spirit that emanated from this discovery enabled even unlearned and ignorant men to turn the world upside down.

The second example I propose to consider is the outburst of missionary activity that was associated with Francis of Assisi. Again we must look at the conditions in the world and in

the Church. The twelfth century after Christ was one in which great struggles were taking place between contending ideals. The long, painful gains of Western civilisation were seriously threatened by Mongols and Tartars in the North and East, and by Turks in the East and South. Still more seriously were they menaced by decay from within. City was armed against city, one feudal lord against another. Private wars and wanton disregard of human life produced a sense of hopelessness and apathy.

In the Church conditions were desperate indeed. The horrible abuses of the papacy were a scandal throughout Christendom. The priesthood was profligate. The monasteries were wealthy and tyrannous. The people were down-trodden. Religion being in such hands, it is small wonder that it had fallen into disrepute and disuse. Christ was worshipped simply as a Figure on the Cross, to be approached only through the Virgin and the saints, and then only with the aid of priests who inspired no confidence in the people. The authority of the Church, the superstitious fear of the consequences of disobeying this authority, the ignorance of the common people, were the chief

factors in maintaining the show of religion. The thing itself, the personal relationship springing out of an immediate sense of God's presence, seems to have been almost lost. We can, nevertheless, trace in the history of the time the stirrings of a new hope. In not a few earnest minds a spirit of expectancy was arising, even as we find in the time of our Lord that there were those who preserved a simple faith, and "were looking for the consolation of Israel."

We can date the definite answer to this eager hope from the time when the gay Francis began to think of taking to himself "a wife more beautiful, more rich, more pure than you could ever imagine," and especially from the day when, kneeling in the chapel of St. Damian in great travail of spirit, he looked up and seemed to see the eyes of Christ fixed upon him in tender love. As he made the great discovery, his whole soul went out in love and devotion to his Lord. The missionary call that came to him on the Festival of St. Matthias, 1209, was but the working out of this great discovery. The finding of God was so stupendous a fact in his life that he could not keep it to himself. Immediately after hearing the call he went out into the streets of

his own town, preaching the good news in the very place where the difficulties were greatest. He saw that the discovery was not for himself alone. He spoke in such simple language that all could understand. There was so little of mark in his words that they were often forgotten by his hearers. But these simple words were the means of bringing them directly into the presence of God. No longer must they go into a building, listen to a certain form of words, approach the Almighty through priest and saint and Virgin. They stood in the open air, and were ushered direct into the great presence chamber. All the hindrances of an elaborate ritual were boldly discarded, and men and women entered with joy into the direct knowledge of God, and found their hearts flooded with the surpassing love of Christ. Those who heard and received the message became themselves missionaries possessed by the new spirit. A change began in men's outlook upon God. As Sabatier says :—" It is the end of dogmatism and authority ; it is the coming in of individualism and inspiration : very uncertain, no doubt, and to be followed by obstinate reactions, but none the less marking a date in the history of the human conscience." " The

whole heart of Italy began to be stirred with a new enthusiasm for spiritual things, with an awakened spiritual life."<sup>1</sup>

This movement illustrates further the second element in the missionary spirit, the discovery of our fellow-man. The well-known story of Francis and the leper gives a picture of how truly he discovered his fellows. They are not for him mere chattels, "the common herd." In each one he sees the Lord Christ. None is too lowly or too vile to be worthy of his tenderest love and his fullest service. For Francis and his followers poverty, simplicity, service, were the avenues of approach to God and to man. In the wonder of all that was opened to them as they stepped along this path, their hearts were filled with joy and their mouths with songs of praise. In the world of to-day in which wealth and sophistry and self-seeking have dimmed our vision of God and of our fellows, how great the need for us to enter into the wonderland of these elemental and eternal facts !

While the history of the Christian Church is filled with examples from which I might

<sup>1</sup> *Revivals : Their Laws and Leaders*, by James Burns (p. 81), ■ book which well repays careful study at the present time.

further illustrate these points, I must confine myself here to one other—the story of the birth of Quakerism. The age that witnessed this event was, in many respects, very different from that in which the early Christians or the followers of Francis lived and taught. The England of the middle of the seventeenth century was passing through a time of keen religious ferment. Everyone was discussing religious and theological themes. New sects had broken out in bewildering confusion. A spirit of unrest and enquiry was in the air. Great changes were in progress both in State and in Church. With all this, however, there was much formalism and deadness. The long dogmatic discussions often revealed very little true spiritual life. Men looked hither and thither, and still failed to find the true centre of life and power. The experience of George Fox, in his round of enquiries from priest and professor, was no isolated phenomenon. Many there were who were confused by the proffered panaceas, who failed to hear any truly authoritative word of God, and for whom religious controversy had a deadening effect.

In the midst of this chaos and ferment there arose one of those great missionary movements

that, for a while, seemed likely to sweep everything before it. This movement, I need not remind you, found its origin again in the immediate discovery of God by a number of men and women in whom there was, therefore, born a mighty passion for making Him known to men. The arid plains of disputations and vituperations become flooded with a life-giving stream. Those who had drawn their inspiration direct from the Source of all Life and Power were mighty instruments by which new life and power were let loose in the world. What impresses me more than anything else, in reading the records of the beginnings of our Society, is the victorious certainty of God that breaks out again and again. There is no doubt of His leading, there is no question about His presence. We get back to the days of the early Church when men said, with quiet assurance, in the face of religious leaders of weight and standing : " We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Ghost whom God hath given to them that obey Him."

" The leaders of the movement," says W. C. Braithwaite, " did not think of themselves as founders of a new sect. They were far more concerned, in these early years, with proclaiming

what they call the Day of the Lord. They were Publishers of the Truth—men and women to whom the word of the Lord had come, and who must declare it at all costs through town and country, university and hamlet, in church and sessions-house, from market-cross and prison-window, to Cromwell and his officers, to the magistrates and ministers, and to all sorts and conditions of men. Their primary business as pioneers was this work of message-bearing, this broadcast sowing of the seed on every soil; the message was regarded by them as one of universal scope, though the spiritual Israel gathered out of the nation might alone respond to it.”<sup>1</sup>

Again, we see in the Quaker revival that other element of the missionary spirit which springs from the discovery of our fellow-man. The doctrine of the Light Within marked off their attitude towards human nature as entirely different from that which was prevalent in their day. They had found in themselves some seed of God, and they confidently believed that no man was so abandoned as to be without it. Their experience of the divine Power was not, they held, given to them by virtue of anything

<sup>1</sup> *The Beginnings of Quakerism*, p. 151.

that differentiated them from others, or merely by the inscrutable providence and predestination of God, but by virtue of that which was the common possession of all mankind.

The Quaker movement was thus in its essence, and from the very beginning, world-embracing in its scope. There could be no race of men, and no country, however remote, where God had not spoken, and where His voice could not be heard. It is a strange thing that this essentially universal doctrine has been urged as a reason for narrowing down the activities of the Society of Friends. It has been contended that, if God has already spoken to men, there is no need of human help in bringing to them the fuller light that shone in the face of Jesus Christ. Such a contention would tend to show that He who in time past spake "unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners" had no need, at the end of these days, to speak unto us in His Son. It is an argument which, in these days, we have but to state in order to see its absurdity. It was one which could only be used in the dark days, or by the unenlightened minds in our Society.

But the early Friends were under no such misapprehension. To them the discovery of their

fellow-men meant, not simply a theory, but a transforming experience, and they were bound to be missionaries. They pushed out in every direction with the joyful certainty, not simply that God had sent them, and was working with them, but that He had gone before, and had been preparing in each heart a place for the message they were to bring. As we read the story we are carried away with this sense of a universal message, one which, because of its inherent truth, must carry all before it. This is not the place in which to discuss the reasons that led to the disappointment of the early hopes, though they must be studied if we are to guard against the same dangers in our own time. I can only mention two very obvious ones, that should always be before us—the undervaluing of the intellectual side, with the consequent disregard of education as a preparation for spiritual leadership, and the exclusiveness that tried to fence off the Society from undesirables, and that found its extreme form in disownment for “marrying out.” When Friends began to care more for the purity of Quakerism than for the conversion of the world, their chance of universal service was thrown away, and they degenerated into a mere sect.

In the first generation, however, we find an essentially universal spirit. The well-known Epistle of Skipton General Meeting, held on the 25th of Second Month, 1660, breathes this spirit so finely that I venture to quote the larger part of it :

“DEAR FRIENDS AND BRETHREN,

We having certain information from some Friends of London of the great work and service of the Lord beyond the seas, in several parts and regions, as Germany, America, Virginia, and many other places, as Florence, Mantua, Palatine, Tuscany, Italy, Rome, Turkey, Jerusalem, France, Geneva, Norway, Barbadoes, Bermuda, Antigua, Jamaica, Surinam, Newfoundland ; through all which Friends have passed in the service of the Lord, and divers other places, countries, islands and nations ; and over and among many nations of the Indians, in which they have had service for the Lord, who through great travail have published His name and declared the everlasting gospel of peace unto them that have been afar off, that they might be brought nigh unto God, and be made partakers also of the same common salvation, through the riches of his love and grace which have abounded unto usward, that we might show forth his goodness, and faithfulness, and salvation unto the ends of the earth ; and for this end and purpose that the Lord moved many to deny their country, and to leave their families and estates, that they might fulfil the will of the invisible God ; which hath been effected and done by divers who have been moved thereunto, whereby the Truth hath been published, and the work of God greatly prospered in many parts, places, countries, nations and islands, which, in the hearts of many, is a sweet savour, which causes the faithful to rejoice. . . . So, if any be moved to the contributing and for helping them beyond seas, cheerfully do it, and every one to the ministry yourselves, which is [unto] the seed Christ ; for England is as a family of prophets, which must spread over all nations,

as a garden of plants, and the place where the pearl is found which must enrich all nations with the heavenly treasure, out of which shall the waters of life flow, and water all the thirsty ground, and out of which nation and dominion must go the spiritually weaponed and armed men, to fight and conquer all nations, and bring them to the nation of God, that the Lord may be known to be the living God of nations, and his Son to reign, and his people [to be] one."

We can scarcely read these words, written so many years ago, without being carried away by the exuberant hope that such a "family of prophets" might indeed "conquer all nations." There can be no shadow of doubt that the missionary spirit was present in that family. Even in those days, when travel was so difficult, when the seas were infested with pirates, when there was so much to do at home, when the company of the prophets was so small, we find not only the conviction that they "must spread over all nations," but also the plans laid for such a campaign. This missionary spirit was the direct outcome of the double discovery of God and of their fellow-men which is characteristic of the early Quaker movement.

In the light of these illustrations, we may now gather together our main general conclusions in regard to the nature of the Christian missionary spirit, and its method of expression in the world.

1.—The first essential element is the personal discovery of God, or, as Prof. Gwatkin puts it, when “God’s image within recognises God’s truth without.” If discovery of any truth is liable to produce the missionary spirit, how much more when this—the greatest of all human discoveries—is made! There is untold potential energy waiting for release when the Divine and the human spirits meet. Professor Eucken reminds us that “in the bosom of Christianity unfathomable forces are slumbering—forces which have by no means lived themselves out, and are still capable of breaking forth again and driving human life into new channels with an irresistible and elemental violence.” But he goes on to warn us that “the contact of divine and human begets daimonic forces which may work either for revolution and renewal or for destruction and desolation.”<sup>1</sup> This danger is illustrated in many great religious movements. To some it may seem that the very experience through which we are passing is one such, that there is in process a glad sacrifice for high ideals that actually connects human lives with the divine resources, but that some dread fate has intervened to direct this all-conquering

<sup>1</sup> *Can we still be Christians?* p. 211.

stream of heroism and passion for the right into channels which lead to devastation and destruction.

Be that as it may, we have no justification for pessimism. We need to seek the more urgently for that discovery of God, as He truly is in all His fulness, that shall drive human life into the channels of renewal. This is the discovery which has again and again been vouchsafed to men and women, and which is the one starting point of the Christian missionary spirit. Most frequently, perhaps, in the Christian experience, this discovery comes through the sense of deliverance from sin, either from the pressing guilt of past sin, or from the bondage of present evil that holds us in its grip. Sin is the general term that covers all that separates our spirit from the divine spirit. The eternal fact is stated in the prophetic message, "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save, neither his ear heavy that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God." Christ's great message to man was the destruction of every barrier that thus separated. It was His supreme work to bring us into that same glad sense of the immediate and abiding

presence of the Father that possessed Him. This He does as His spirit overcomes in us the self-regarding instinct and the self-seeking spirit, and creates in us the new heart that can enter into fellowship with God. The connection once established is transforming. The tides of a new life are actually liberated in every human spirit that makes this discovery.

Whoso hath felt the Spirit of the Highest  
Cannot confound, nor doubt Him, nor deny.

We must, at the same time, remind ourselves that no isolated experience is adequate. Such discovery must be renewed again and again. There is no finality in our knowledge of God. All the powers of our mind and spirit must be humbly directed towards the full discovery of His mind and will. This attitude alone saves the missionary from arrogance and self-assertion, and from the loss of his missionary spirit as he continues to give his message amidst the discouragement of opposition or indifference, or during the more subtle temptations that are born of success.

2. The soul that has been awakened into new life by the discovery of God leaps forth in loyal obedience to His will. "Lo, I am come to do Thy will" is the word that describes the

ruling passion not only of the Master's life but of that of each servant. "The will of Christ in this matter is a call to a grand adventure. Never has a human will been set on ends so lofty and sublime. What object of human endeavour can be compared with the purpose of Christ to redeem human life from the evils that assail and corrupt it, to establish a Kingdom resting not on force, but on the free service of converted wills, to bring to pass that the will of God should be done on earth as it is done in heaven, to destroy the unbelief in men's hearts and make them children of the Father in Heaven? As the explorer goes out to discover new lands, as the adventurer sets forth to find or build a kingdom, Christ calls His followers to explore the undiscovered treasures of the spiritual world, and to labour for a kingdom of everlasting splendour, a Kingdom of truth and righteousness and love, whose builder and maker is God. The world does not believe in His ends. They are too high. It laughs at them as impossible. What spectacle can compare in courage with the Will of Christ in grappling with the unbelief and sin of the world?"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J. H. Oldham in *The Missionary Motive*, pp. 32, 33.

The loyalty of the Christian missionary is a very courageous loyalty. It is an identification of himself with Christ in this amazing programme for the world. It is not the blind following by one who is willing slavishly to do what he is told. It is the acceptance, by the whole personality, of Christ's redemptive purpose, all that it is seen to involve, and the very much more that it may be found to involve as we continue to follow Him. This loyalty is, therefore, no less than the discovery of God, a progressive thing. It is a loyalty that is found to include within its majestic sweep every worthy loyalty in life. The missionary of the Kingdom of God admits no conflict of loyalties. The more he comes to know of his Master, the more he proves His power to meet the aspiration of every human heart, of every family and race and nation.

3.—The attitude of deliberate choice, the natural outcome of the awakening of the soul to the reality of God and His supreme claim upon man's life, is reinforced by that mental attitude which we speak of as conviction. The tedious process of argument will not make a man a missionary any more than it will make him a

Christian. The extent to which his conviction is based upon sound logic will depend upon his temperament and his training. While his power of stating his case convincingly is secondary to his power of transmitting his spirit by the contagion of his personality, it is, nevertheless, a real power. The narrow-minded bigot may be an effective missionary, but he is peculiarly liable to that grave danger to which I referred, in quoting Professor Eucken's words. An enlightened mind, as well as a deeply convinced one, should be characteristic of the Christian missionary.

Wherever we find a true missionary we find one who is soundly convinced in his own mind. Now, we know that the strongest convictions of youth may be altered or destroyed in consequence of a changed spiritual attitude that seeks for a logical basis for actions we desire to perform, but recognise to be inconsistent with our previous convictions. Conversely it is true that our spiritual attitude may be altered as, with increasing thought or knowledge, we come to modify our intellectual convictions. Intellectual stagnation is almost as serious as spiritual stagnation, and is often the father of it. If, therefore, the missionary spirit is to be maintained, there is an ever-present need of

intellectual growth. The mind, as well as the heart, needs an enlarging experience. No missionary movement can long be maintained in purity and vigour without this condition.

It is frequently urged that missionary enthusiasm wanes as the missionary is educated, or as the educational aspect of the missionary movement is developed. I wish emphatically to maintain that there is no such necessary relationship. On the contrary, I hold that the maintenance of the true Christian missionary spirit demands an expansion on the intellectual side. It is a significant fact that the modern missionary movement which, in almost every case, began as a piece of definite evangelistic work, has developed, in one country after another, increasingly on educational lines, first with the establishment of primary schools and the teaching of the Bible, until we have now reached the Missionary University, with all its departments, and the well organised medical college carried on by missionary societies. This development is, in my opinion, a recognition—in some cases a tardy recognition—of this essential element in the missionary idea. Enthusiasm without education must lead, sooner or later, to fanaticism and error.

It is, of course, equally true that education without a development in the knowledge of God, and loyalty to His will, may lead to the parched wastes of intellectualism, where the missionary spirit can never flourish. It is not, however, the growth of the educational element, but the failure to recognise the need of growth on the other side that is really to blame. By thinking of the soul as reaching maturity in one sudden moment of illumination, while the mind, we suppose, must climb laboriously to the mount of vision, we have created an atmosphere that ultimately destroys the missionary spirit. The fault lies in thinking not too much of the development of the mind, but too little of that of the soul. The recapture of the missionary spirit is not to be attained by any process of "readjusting the balance," but by simply turning our hearts again with eagerness towards the search for the living God.

4.—The Christian missionary is one who has not only discovered God, but also his fellow-man. Here we find, perhaps, the chief reason why many who have the true Christian experience are not themselves filled with the missionary spirit. They have not seen their neighbours as

men and women possessing the same needs and the same divine possibilities as have been revealed in their own hearts by the illuminating touch of the Spirit of God. More than this may indeed be said. This phenomenon is in reality an awakening to the boundlessness of one's own personality. We not only love the other man we possess him. We are bound in one with our brethren. In such an experience contempt changes automatically to compassion, and desire to defeat into the passion to win. Many a missionary dates his missionary impulse not from his conversion, but from some awakening to the world's need. It is evident that this awakening would have no meaning save to one who had already been awakened to the realities of the divine Kingdom. It is because he knows within himself the answer to that need that he is seized with a passion to meet it. But the missionary impulse dates from such a vision, well expressed in the oft-quoted words :

Only like souls I see the folk thereunder,  
Bound who should conquer, slaves who should be kings,  
Hearing their one hope with an empty wonder,  
Sadly contented in a show of things—

Then with a rush the intolerable craving  
Shivers throughout me like a trumpet call—

Oh to save these ! to perish for their saving,  
Die for their life, be offered for them all !

Merely to present this need will not create the missionary spirit. No doubt, however, at times when the need of mankind is particularly urgent, or is vividly brought to our mind, a condition precedent exists for the development of the missionary spirit. The birth of Quakerism came at a time when men were thus awakened to the extraordinary possibilities of a new world, and when there opened out before the eyes of all thoughtful men the vision of a larger brotherhood for the race. We live in an age when this call comes with great insistence. The unity of mankind seems possible in the intellectual, and even in the political sphere—not, perhaps, very near, but at least very much worth striving for. The unity of mankind in one spiritual brotherhood is at least as worthy of our thought and discussion, and is certainly far more fraught with possibilities of good for the race than any other kind of unity.

Such a unity can only be achieved if there be a basal unity in our human nature. The discovery of our fellow-men as truly one with ourselves, will enable us to see this as a practicable goal for all our endeavours. When we see

within the nation all men as truly our brothers, with like passions and needs to our own ; when we see men of all races, nations and colours as possessed of divine potentialities no whit less than those which have been awakened within ourselves, we are fain to go out into the highways and hedges and compel them also to come to the wedding feast. The Christian missionary has seen this vision. For him there can be no near or far, no Jew or Gentile. By virtue of this great discovery he knows that the walls of partition have been broken down, and he becomes the true disciple of One who loved to claim for Himself the title Son of Man. In the proclamation of this message he verifies its adaptibility to all, and its vitality and veracity. He has discovered his fellow-men as they are, sinful, ignorant, debased, but not without something that must answer to his appeal on behalf of God. He discovers them more fully as he brings the message, the seed is awakened, the most impossible and hopeless are transformed, even these enter with joy into the knowledge of their Saviour. The missionary spirit gains immeasurably as it is responded to, and as the missionary gives himself without reserve to the holy task upon which he has entered.

How, then, is this spirit to express itself? I need not add much to what I have already said as to the method of propagation. The method must be true to the essential nature of the message, and to the spirit animating him who gives it. What the Christian missionary seeks to do is not merely to get people to accept his ideas. His concern is to awaken in others that same missionary spirit that has possessed him. He cannot be content with anything less. It is not, therefore, the number of his converts that is the criterion of his real success: it is rather their spirit. If he leaves behind him a large well-ordered Christian community without any missionary zeal, he has certainly done good work, but something short of the best. If he leaves behind him a very few who have caught his spirit, who are filled with a passion to save men, he has truly achieved the grand purpose of his mission. While Christ undoubtedly preached to large numbers and sought to help many who were afflicted and diseased, it is evident that His dominating concern was to create a small group of whom the missionary spirit had taken possession. We hear much talk in these days of the need of an indigenous

Christianity. Our Lord's method is the method for achieving this result. The Christian missionary's task is to create not simply Christians but missionaries.

From this it follows that our first duty is to lead men to a personal discovery of God, with all that is therein involved, and to the discovery of their fellow-men. This task can never be achieved by either of the two methods I discussed earlier. Compulsion by force of arms may lead to conversion to the religion of another, but it is perfectly obvious that it is not along this path that we move towards the personal discovery of God. The exhibition and use of authority, overawing men by the display of greater knowledge, may easily lead to their accepting your opinions. If this is all we desire, it may be achieved by such a method. The creeds of Christendom may be repeated with full conviction of their truth. But this is not enough to make a missionary Church. Only by the third method can we lead men along the path which brings them at last into the very presence of God. And only as the Holy Spirit works with us in this great endeavour can we hope to see 'a truly indigenous Church brought into being—one in which the same springs of

action operate as those which have driven forth the Christian missionary himself.

## II.—THE PRESENT OPPORTUNITY

Having attempted to gather from the past, and from our study of the human mind, what light we may upon the nature of the missionary spirit and the method of its expression, we can approach the particular problems of to-day with certain convictions. I have purposely chosen my examples from certain periods of great missionary activity in the life of the Church. I do not, of course, consider that the missionary spirit is only manifested at such times. In very many cases we see what might be termed the sporadic outbreak of this same spirit in a single individual or in small groups. It is clear, however, that there have been certain periods in the history of the Christian Church during which large numbers have been seized with the missionary spirit. At these times, great advances have taken place. New views of truth have opened up. Old barriers have been swept away. Men and women have entered into a joyous experience of God, He has been rediscovered by many who had only heard of Him with the hearing of the ear, but

who at such times, can say with Job, "Now mine eye seeth Thee."

I have thought it worth while to use some of these periods for illustration, because I am convinced that we are now entering upon another such period, and, further, because I believe that the Society of Friends is called upon to render a peculiar service at this moment. Let us now concentrate our whole attention upon the need of our own time, and our own relation thereto.

We have been living through a time when it has been peculiarly difficult to realise the nearness of God to human life. Several influences have conspired together towards this result. Though they are familiar to us, we may do well briefly to enumerate the outstanding ones.

1. The general trend of scientific thought has been to put God into the background, if not actually to eliminate Him from His own world. Evolution, a word but dimly understood by many who freely use it, is made to do duty for a conception of human progress that leaves no room for an active providence, and "explains" everything by a supposed inherent capacity in mankind for gradually getting better. The

doctrine of the uniformity of nature, on which the whole advance in scientific knowledge ultimately rests, seems to leave no room for miracle in the older sense of the word, and has been largely responsible for the extremes of the higher critical movement. The rewriting of the Old and New Testaments on the assumption that anything supernatural is mere myth and superstition is not genuine criticism. It is an entirely different thing from the reverent attempt to disentangle the various strains that have contributed to the bringing together of our Bible, or the effort to distinguish clearly between the historical and the allegorical. The onslaught upon the whole idea of the supernatural has left even those who maintain their faith in a living and active God timorous and apologetic, at a time when they should be, as it were, forcing the battle into the enemy's country.

Not only in the region of religious controversy has this been noticeable. Prayer has been viewed mainly on its subjective side. We have been afraid to say much about its objective efficacy; we have even been prevented from asking overmuch lest we should be guilty of the presumption of seeking to upset the "laws of nature." Our devotional life has

thereby been impoverished, and we have come to think of God as an Influence rather than as a Father, as a Cause at the beginning of all things rather than as an Actor here and now in this world. That this is, in part, a reaction from a crude or childish conception of God does not make it any the less a present danger. Long ago the prophet Zephaniah saw that the gravest menace to the life of the nation came from those who "say in their heart the Lord will not do good, neither will He do evil." To oppose God is less serious than to leave Him on one side. The peculiar attitude of our age could hardly be more aptly portrayed. The catch-word is, "It doesn't matter what you believe so long as your life is all right." This is only another way of shelving God. Pseudo-scientific materialism may seem to many of us a spent force. But its ill-effects cannot be swept out of our common life merely by the dead weight of its own inertia. That inertia has settled down upon us, and it can only be driven forth by the rushing of a mighty wind, when once again the Spirit of God breaks forth in human life.

2. It is not only, nor, indeed, mainly, in the realm of thought that we meet the strongest forces operating against the free tide of spiritual

life. When we review our whole social order from the point of view of the ideals of the Kingdom of God we become aware of a deep discrepancy. I cannot here discuss how far it may be possible to have any element of competition in a perfect state of society. No serious student of the Christian ethic can doubt, however, that co-operation is the foundation of a Christian society. By love we must serve one another. We are to seek, each man, not his own but another's good. We are, in fact, to love our neighbour as ourselves. Our so-called Christian civilisation denies this ideal at every turn. We engage, in spite of ourselves, in the eager attempt to get the better of somebody else. "We must stand up for our rights." The whole system, we think, would go to pieces if we didn't. Unbridled fraud, brigandage and theft would flourish if any large number of persons were so inconceivably foolish as to be careless of their rights of property and person. It is not only a defensive attitude, however, that we adopt. We have been told by military authorities that defensive warfare demands offensive methods. In commerce we learnt the lesson long ago. On the plea that we "must live somehow," we do a hundred things that show clearly our sense

of the unimportance of the life of somebody else—or of somebody else's children.

Our national life, we assume, can only flourish at the expense of some other nation or nations. Under the blessing of the Church a vast system of armaments is piled higher and higher, again "to defend our rights." The fact that to-day they are being used in so ghastly a way adds point to the moral, but does not really change the nature of the problem. International no less than commercial competition, as at present practised, stands utterly condemned by the principles of the Christian ethic. The whole system breathes denial of Christ.

We go about seeking God in the midst of this world order, and it is small wonder that we fail. We try to find room for Him to comfort and strengthen us in an atmosphere in which, to speak with reverence, He cannot breathe. We want to bring Him in to do certain things for us, and the whole effort is doomed to tragic failure, for He can only break into human society by breaking up the fabric of it. When God comes to the world in the fulness of His power everything must be subjected to His transforming presence—the world must be turned upside down. We don't really want Him

to come this way. We want Him on our own terms, and so He cannot come in power.

The men through whom the great words of God have been spoken in the past have been at war with the system in which they have found themselves. By breaking with the system they have found their way to God. The Church is designed to be thus at war with all that is unchristian in the world system. In this age, however, she is identified with it. The spirit of rivalry has entered into the Church herself. Her diverse sections, at war with one another, are impotent to check the war spirit in the world. She has identified herself with a separatist nationalism, and is riven to-day into two segments, each seeking the other's destruction. The words "By love serve one another," sound like a hideous mockery when coming from the preachers of religion who are urging their followers on to destroy one another with all the most cunning and barbarous devices of modern scientific warfare.

3. We all know the common plea by which all this denial of the Christian ethic is justified on both sides. "It was inevitable; no other course was open to us: the world being as it is, it was the best possible." "God had to let His

people choose the gospel of the second best.”<sup>1</sup> Such an excuse discloses to us the still deeper failure of our common religious life whereby we have kept God at arm’s length. We admit together that this is a terrible denial of the Christian ideal. Wherever the proximate blame may be placed, the ultimate blame is seen to be shared by us all, in that we have so lived that no better way was open to us, or that we were so blind we could not discover it when the hour of our testing suddenly came. This plea really means that those who make it have given up the attempt to realise here and now the Kingdom of God on earth. It is no longer “at hand” for them, but afar off, only to be reached by long and devious paths in which they are compelled to use the very weapons they seek to destroy.

“ They continually seek after new formulæ by which to bring the Kingdom of God nearer to the kingdoms of this world. They always find some way of explaining the Gospel of Jesus as applicable merely to His own time, thereby robbing it of all its peculiar virtue and force. They defend capitalism, they defend war. They always manage to find a new formula to justify in the eyes of religion whatever the world finds good. Hence they are more dangerous than the professed representatives of the world. And so it is with all the progress of the Kingdom of God ; it is retarded less by the world

<sup>1</sup> The Bishop of London as reported in the *Daily Chronicle*, 10th June, 1915.

than by a Christianity which allies itself with the world."<sup>1</sup>

The very forces that ought to be making for righteousness have thus lost their power. The Church that looks on at the violation of her Lord's commands unmoved, that blesses those who so act, and that justifies such violation on the plea of necessity, cannot be in the way of realising His presence. I am not speaking of deliberate insincerity. The pity of it is that we have strayed so far that we cannot see our own failure. We are all, to some extent, involved in it, and it has needed a world-wide catastrophe to show us the extent of our apostasy. It is not a question of getting right simply on the one question of war. We are now faced with an absolute conflict between two types of religion. The issue is joined, and there can be no truce. Either the Kingdom of God is at hand, and we can take possession of it and let it take possession of us, or we must wait long generations more, and seek it through countless

\* Professor Ragaz in *Goodwill*, 29th March, 1915. cf. The following from M. Romain Rolland, *Above the Battle*, p. 108, "Man cultivates the vices that are profitable to him, but feels the necessity of legitimising them, being unwilling to sacrifice them, he must idealise them. That is why the problem at which he has never ceased to labour . . . has been to harmonise his ideals with his own mediocrity. He has always succeeded."

compromises. Either we must cut clear down to the absolute line of righteousness and love, and accept to the full the risks of so doing, or we must engage in the delicate and soul-destroying work of justifying to ourselves and to our neighbours every fresh device for bringing in the Kingdom of God by half-measures.

But what I am here trying to maintain is simply this—that the Church has chosen the second path, that she is now so used to doing so that she cannot see the nature of her own choice, and that, by this choice, she may even make of none effect her prayers for revival, and for the outpouring of the Spirit of God. The full tides of God's power cannot flood in through the well-prepared channels of our respectable, half-hearted goodness. There must be some quality in our morality that it sadly lacks if God is indeed to come near to us. "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." Our Lord clearly does not call His disciples to a more punctilious observance of the Law. He demands a quality absent in the religion of the day. Conventional goodness will never usher in the Kingdom of God,

4. There is one other condition of modern life to which I must refer. In considering the Franciscan revival, we were reminded of the deadening effect of wealth. To-day our riches, our luxury, our ease, are standing between our souls and God. The gravamen of the charge lies not simply in the self-indulgence induced ; it is rather that these things engender a sense of security. When Christ demanded the great surrender from the rich young man, He was in reality calling him not so much into a life of poverty as into one of adventure. What he saw was a man utterly secure in his habitual observance of the law and in his well-appointed, comfortable home. "How hard it is," he says, "for them that trust in riches to enter into the Kingdom of God." How hard it is, we might add, for them that have riches not to trust in them. All unconsciously the sense of security wraps us round. We pass day after day in a well ordered routine, never feeling any need to pray for our daily bread. We scarcely ever face a situation in which we should be utterly helpless without God. The more sure we are of drawing our dividends, the less do we need to draw on the divine resources. And so we go on complacently until the unexpected suddenly

happens, as this war happened ; the Son of Man comes like a thief in the night ; our sense of security is shattered, our possessions gone, and, facing the great Disturber of our peace, we find ourselves naked and ashamed.

This is an age for the accumulation of vast fortunes. Modern business is so organised that it is scarcely possible to avoid the piling up of wealth. What disturbs me, however, is not the wealth of the world, but the wealth of the Church. In laying up for ourselves treasures on earth, I greatly fear we have been paying scant attention to the treasure in heaven. I find very little in the New Testament on the virtue of thrift. I find highest praise bestowed on the reckless extravagance of one who broke, not for her own use, an alabaster box of spikenard, very precious, and on the wasteful generosity of another who threw all her tiny living into the treasury. The following of Jesus was a risky thing in Galilee. In London it is the road to middle-class respectability and a comfortable bank account. The kind of life the average Christian lives makes so small a demand upon him that it is small wonder he turns to the battle-field to manifest his inherent love of adventure. Jesus appealed boldly to the heroic in men. We are

so well provided for that we have almost forgotten we are capable of heroism until we are plunged again into barbaric ferocity. Our myriad insurance policies, our skilfully invested capital, our prosperous business houses, are making conditions in which it is peculiarly difficult for us to hear the call to leave all and follow Him. A Zeppelin dropping bombs over our homes may be the one thing needed to save our souls from the deadening effects of gilt-edged securities.

If what I have said contains any true diagnosis of the age through which we have been living, it is perfectly apparent that the time is ripe for a new missionary awakening. We have become involved together in a state of things in which it is peculiarly difficult for us to see God. "Something," says Professor Cairns, "has somewhere gone wrong with the common Christian thought of God."

"Be it remembered," he continues, "that, if such a lapse were an almost universal lapse, affecting the life of the advanced Christian as well as the life of the beginner, affecting the life of the whole Church for many centuries, and penetrating all its literature and works of devotion, it would be something which it would be almost impossible to detect, until some great common failure brought to light the common fall. We all inevitably judge our own conceptions of God and goodness by the standards which prevail in the society to which we belong, or, if we go beyond these, by the

venerable figures of the past. It is strange how, under these influences, we can all become blind to the one absolute Christian standard contained in the Divine Word. It may take some great emergency of extreme personal or social need to drive us past all these existing or historical standards, to make us all forget our own wisdom as well as our own folly, and to bring us as simple disciples back again to the Galilean spring-time and the morning of the Resurrection."<sup>1</sup>

Such a great common failure has come to our civilisation. In the light of this catastrophe many are seeking out towards reality with an eager desire hitherto unknown. They are determined to pierce behind the shams and compromises that have satisfied them too long. A desperate situation demands a desperate remedy, and it is just this sense of desperation that we have hitherto lacked, but that is the surest road to God.

More than this, however, is to be said. Already many are actually finding their way to a new discovery of God. Nothing short of this will be in the least degree adequate to the situation in which we find ourselves. Sectarian shibboleths will not save us. The resurrection of ancient testimonies will not be found to satisfy the heart craving of man. We cannot preach any mere *ism*. We must stand in the full tide of the new life of God until we are swept

<sup>1</sup> *International Review of Missions*, Jan. 1916, p. 109.

off our feet and have perforce to swim. It is equally certain that it will not do simply to urge men to become the missionaries of the new age from loyalty to a past tradition, or from intense conviction of the truth of a time-honoured creed. We must have a rebirth of the missionary spirit springing up in men's hearts, and driving them forth into the service of humanity. This missionary spirit, as I have tried to show already, finds its mainspring in the consciousness of a new direct personal discovery of God. If our faith be not in vain, it does, as a matter of simple fact, derive direct from the Eternal Source of Good. It betokens the actual invasion of human life by the living and active Spirit of God. We look for nothing less than this. I am persuaded that this is precisely what is already happening in our midst. Multitudes of men are facing the realities on the battlefield as never before. Sorrow and bereavement are leading many to look beyond this present world. The revelation of evil that has come with so great a calamity has forced men to question as to the true nature of good. In the face of persecution and misunderstanding many are standing for their convictions in a way that shows they have made some personal

discovery of the true values of life, whether they speak of it in religious terminology or not.

### III. THE RELATION OF FRIENDS TO THE PRESENT OPPORTUNITY

Now, what is to be the relation of the Society of Friends to this situation? The nature of the catastrophe that has served to reveal the true meaning of the situation has forced our Society into prominence, and has isolated us, to some extent, from many of our fellow-Christians. This involves a serious responsibility and a peculiar opportunity. There is more in the situation than an adventitious prominence. There are certain aspects of the present situation that seem to me to mark out the Society of Friends for a special relationship to it. I draw attention to these, not in order to magnify the Society, but that we may the better make our own peculiar contribution at this supreme hour in the life of the world.

1. I shall begin with the most obvious point, namely, the relation of Friends to War. This principle of the Society has never been a merely negative one. To George Fox it was "the virtue of a life" that made him a man of peace. "It hath pleased the Lord," says the Yearly

Meeting Epistle of 1744, " by the breaking forth of the glorious light of His Gospel, and the shedding abroad of His Holy Spirit, to gather us to be a people to His praise, and to unite us in love, not only into one another, but to the whole creation of God. . . . Wherefore, we entreat all who profess themselves members of our Society to be faithful to that ancient testimony, borne by us ever since we were a people, against bearing arms and fighting." It was this positive experience of overflowing love, giving a new life, that issued in the testimony against war. No less dynamic principle will avail to-day. Is love really inconsistent with all war? May we not be leaving out of our idea of love some strong element of righteousness ever present in our Lord's attitude towards men? Do we, by loving our enemies, in reality fail in love to our friends who have come to rely upon our protection? Is it not possible, after all, to kill a man with love towards him in our hearts? These are some of the questions that press most hardly to-day upon the advocate of "inviolable peace." The answer can only be found in an actual experience of transforming love. We go back to the one supreme example of love. The passion of our Lord's life was to

save men. "Never upon this earth was so perfectly seen that love which consists in complete identification."<sup>1</sup> His death was a redemptive identification of Himself with men. It is the one perfect expression of love in the history of the world. We are saved into a life like that of Jesus, not merely by an intellectual acceptance of a doctrine relative to His death, but by knowing His identification of Himself with us to be a reality, and correspondingly identifying ourselves with Him. This is expressed by the Apostle Paul in the sixth chapter of Romans: "We by our baptism were buried with Him in death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from among the dead by His Father's glorious power, we also should live an entirely new life." This life is a life wholly committed to the task of saving men. We are not only saved from sin, and all that hides from us the vision of our Father and prevents us from doing His will. We are brought into a union with Christ that demands expression in a life of service. The method must be His method, personal redemptive identification of ourselves with others.

<sup>1</sup> From an anonymous article on "A Fundamental Problem of Missions," in the *International Review of Missions*, Vol. II., p. 219.

Our Lord staked everything on the power of a love that suffered to the uttermost. The full weight of evil was brought to bear upon Him. By the glorious power of His Father, He triumphed over death and in death. When the meaning of the Cross truly enters our soul, when we experience its power and identify ourselves with Him who suffered on our behalf, there springs up in us the same passion to save, love triumphs over hate and over fear and over death, and we know the virtue of that life and power that takes away the occasion of all wars. This dynamic love, we maintain, cannot express itself in war. When we are born into this new world all our values change. Only as we see things *sub specie æternitatis* can we achieve a love both to our enemies and to those who depend upon us. But we have so seen the Father in Christ that we cannot admit that there is an alternative between loving either the one or the other. We must love all in our own sphere, and potentially all men. If it is not possible to love all, our whole conception of God and the Universe goes to pieces. Our life derives from a new creation within us whose essence is a universal love, expressing itself in personal redemptive identification with all. We must stake everything on this.

Now it is perfectly clear that this is no abstract doctrine or testimony. It is the outcome of an inward experience of the love of God. Nothing short of this can enable a man truly to bear this characteristic Quaker testimony. Only the discovery of God as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, expressing Himself in history through the life and death of His Son, and in our hearts as we are transformed into this same spirit—only such a discovery can fill a man with the missionary spirit of the early Friends. It is men and women who have made this discovery for themselves that the world needs to-day.

2. What is the characteristic of the Quaker morality? Everyone knows that Quaker honesty and trustworthiness have been regarded as characteristic virtues. I am not concerned to discuss how far these qualities are still manifested in the Society, or whether the reputation was well or ill earned. I simply record it as a plain fact. People saw something in the Friend that they recognised as superior to the average level of morality. The word of a Quaker was trusted; the quality of his goods could be relied upon. Now, I am not sure whether what I conceive to be the fundamental distinction

between the Quaker morality and that which was current in religious circles, was clearly seen by very many who were outstanding examples of it. I believe this distinction, however, lies very deep in what I may call, for want of a better term, the Quaker philosophy of life.

The current criticism of Quakerism is that we are ahead of our time, or that we stand for an ideal that only few can attain. Even high sacramentarians may be found to admit that the non-ritual worship and practice of Friends would be all right in an ideal world, but that, men being as they are, rites and forms are needed as an outward means of receiving spiritual blessing. Even those whose form of service is most liturgical will grant the value of silence to persons whose spiritual faculties are so far developed as to be able to appreciate it. The position accorded to women in our Society is admitted by most to be one which, in course of time, other Churches must come to adopt.<sup>1</sup> The grievous failure of Quakerism, on this view, is that we have been blind to the need for a gradual development, we have tried to skip the necessary stages, we have thought to practise at once a lofty ideal for which the world is not yet ready.

<sup>1</sup> I do not wish it to be assumed that I regard these practices as an inevitable outcome of the type of morality for which I plead.

The time has come for us again boldly to ask the question, Which is right? Has the painful process of continual adjustment to worldly standards brought in the Kingdom of God? Has it not rather led us to this terrible strait in which we find the Church of Christ committed to whole-hearted and eager participation in the most bloody war in the history of the world? Has it not alienated vast masses of earnest and thoughtful men from a Church that is unwilling boldly to grapple with the root causes of industrial bitterness, and that seeks justification for the business methods of a world dominated by self-interest? The answer to this question can again only be found, for the Christian, by going back to Christ. In Him we see the fearless acceptance of His own ideal, in the midst of a world that wholly failed to understand the meaning of His actions. If the life of Jesus is normative for the Christian, I maintain that we are committed to a similar path of unswerving obedience to the holy will of God. It may mean disaster. The world does not seem to be constructed on principles that admit of the possibility of such a life. But again we must see things *sub specie æternitatis*, and only thus shall we become aware that under-

neath all there is the eternal principle of goodness and love that we recognise in our Father, and that He cannot be finally defeated in a world so fashioned as to respond to His nature. By running counter to His nature we are as little able to discover the spiritual realities as would be the man of science who deliberately ignored the law of gravitation. When, however, we have made the supreme discovery, we find ourselves in a new world in which we can calmly face the utmost calamity that may be involved in unswerving loyalty to the way of Christ.

The type of morality to which Quakerism stands committed is, in my judgment, the type of morality that is distinctive of Christianity. The oft-forgotten or misapplied apocalyptic element in the New Testament demands for its justification this type of morality. The startling announcement made by John the Baptist, and by our Lord, "The Kingdom of God is at hand," finds no reflection in a Church committed to the hypothesis that good can only be won by adjustments with an evil world. We quietly put off the coming of the Kingdom with power, either to a sudden unaccountable reappearance of our Lord in bodily form, or to a day too distant to be reckoned as within the

text  
sphere of practical politics. I am not able here to discuss what we are to understand by the second coming of our Lord. There is room for many views on so difficult a question. But one thing is clear to me, that it is, in some way, conditioned on human response to His demand on life. Let us remember again His words, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of God." What was the quality missing in that punctilious observance of the law? I believe it was the same quality discovered by the world in the early Quakers—a whole-hearted, reckless committal to the way of truth and goodness and love, springing directly from the personal discovery of God as the greatest reality in all our experience. When this kind of morality possesses us, we shall see how men of violence will take the Kingdom of Heaven by force.

Speaking of this choice in the light of the present war, Professor Ragaz says :

"Part of the significance of the catastrophe which we are witnessing is that it clears up all confusion on this point. Above all, it signalises the complete bankruptcy of the type of Christianity I have described. Help comes to us in the clear recognition of this fact ; and a decisive conflict must be joined between these two conceptions of the message of Jesus. This conflict

alone will bring peace. Two religions, in fact, are confronting each other. This became agonisingly plain to me as the catastrophe broke upon us. Among the solemn vows I made in those awful days was the resolve to dedicate every fibre of my strength to this struggle. It shall be, of course, an objective, not a personal struggle, a fight for truth. All ecclesiastical and dogmatic differences fall into the background and vanish entirely. We step forth upon a wider field."<sup>1</sup>

Unless I misread the meaning of Quakerism, the issue is in no doubt for members of the Society of Friends. But let it be clear that nothing less than a missionary crusade is called for, and that only a missionary spirit born of a personal discovery of God in Christ will drive us forth into so difficult and dangerous an enterprise.

3. The missionary spirit for to-day, then, must be born in a rediscovery of God, and especially as righteous and loving. And these two attributes are interpreted to us in Jesus Christ. But I have said that the missionary spirit finds one of its sources, also, in a discovery of man. Here, too, the Society of Friends stands in a unique relation to the

<sup>1</sup> This and the extract on p. 72, will be found in a letter by Professor Ragaz, Dean of the Theological Faculty of Zurich, to Pastor Gottfried Traub, D.Ph., of Dortmund, a translation of which was published in *Goodwill* for 29th March, 1915, pp. 57ff.

needs of our own time. The doctrine of the Inward Light is one which has been overstated and mis-stated. The early Friends were accused of making themselves equal with God, and there are passages in their writings that give colour to the charge. This, however, was but the natural extravagance born of a startling discovery. It was a reaction against the doctrine of the total depravity of man as then held by the professors of religion. The early Friends had found something of extraordinary importance that had almost been lost sight of, and that, with all the advance of to-day, is in grave danger of being lost sight of again. They saw that, in every human spirit, there was a potentiality, something inherently capable of responding to the call of God, a light which, if truly followed, would lead into the truth. They recognised that this faculty, or, rather, this element in the human spirit, was essentially akin to God. It therefore followed that no man was hopeless. Wherever Friends went they could be certain that the Spirit of God had preceded them, not only preparing the way outwardly, but speaking inwardly to those who listened, that there was a chord in every heart waiting to respond if the right note could

but be struck. Methods of force are either a denial of this principle, or a confession of our inability to act upon it. Our objection to war is not only, in relation to this fact, an instinct against destroying the temple of God. It is an assertion of the superior power of a direct appeal to that within man to which it is our highest duty and privilege to speak. When we say a nation is like a mad dog, that it can respond only to the argument of force, we are going back to a pre-christian conception of human personality. Our Lord believed in the salvability of all men. The abandoned outcast and the respectable aristocrat were both within the scope of a divine love to which "all things are possible."

We need to get hold of this principle again to-day. We need to see our fellow-men as Christ saw them. When we are "baptised into a sense of the needs and conditions of all men" we cannot treat any of them as enemies to be destroyed. We have made the great discovery of our fellow-man. We must love our neighbour as ourself. We are acutely alive to the deep meaning of the Master's words, "Inasmuch as ye did it, or did it not unto one of these least, ye did it or did it not unto Me." This heightened sense of the value of human

personality, so tragically demanded by the things that are happening before our eyes to-day, is not to be won by a mere discussion or a theory of human life, however correct. It also must be inwardly experienced if it is to be held in our consciousness and translated into every activity. There is something extraordinarily dynamic in the life of one who has made this double discovery of God and his neighbour. The force thus generated drives men forth into the world possessed by the Christian missionary spirit.

To me these three aspects of what I have called the Quaker philosophy of life are absolutely fundamental, and the more we study them in the light of to-day's needs the more sure do we become that a rebirth of the Quaker spirit will be fruitful in meeting the condition of the world we live in. But I wish it to be perfectly clear that I use this phrase in no sectarian way. To talk in terms of our own little community is hopelessly inadequate to the present situation. We want something of an altogether different order from the rebirth of a particular denomination. If the view of life to which we stand committed is true, it is far more than a sectarian question. We have been content to accept the

judgment of others, and assume that only a certain type of personality would respond to our message. We base our position, however, upon the deep conviction that it is essential Christianity we are standing for. It is not that I want to see people crowding into the Society of Friends. I question whether our organisation or methods would be adapted to it, and I have the gravest fear of the so-called prestige that comes with large numbers. I do care, however, very greatly that men and women should come into the rich discovery of God and of their fellow-men that shall fill them with the missionary spirit. I think the Society of Friends has a quite specific duty in regard to the present situation. But the less we say of Quakerism, and the more we give ourselves to preaching Christ and Him crucified, the better. I emphasise the position of Quakerism in speaking to an audience of Friends simply in order that we may see how the hand of God is being laid upon us, and that we may also realise how poorly we are equipped to express the great truths for which our Society stands.

Above all else, I want to urge that there is no hope for the world in a traditional acceptance of Quaker testimonies. You might as well

try to command the seas to-day with the fleet that was victorious at Trafalgar. Traditional Quakerism is a contradiction in terms. If we stand for anything it is for the breaking out of new life. No set of views, however true, will meet the demand of our time. It is God we need; and God communicates Himself to men through men. The Society of Friends began as a school of the prophets. We must be nothing less to-day if we are to have any message for to-day. Our missionary spirit can never spring simply from loyalty to our past, or from a deep conviction of the truth of our position. The discovery of God alone will send us forth as His prophets and apostles.

#### IV. THE PRESENT OPPORTUNITY

I do not wish to close this lecture, however, by any consideration of duty applicable only or mainly to one section of the Christian Church. The missionary spirit has found expression in the lives of men and women of all sects and of all times. The present opportunity confronts no one denomination alone. The solution of the vast problems with which we are faced cannot be reached by members of any one group of Christians working in isolation.

There is one characteristic of the Christian missionary spirit to which I may seem to have drawn too little attention. As we contemplate this characteristic, we realise the urgent necessity for the largest possible combination of diverse personalities and groups, for meeting the needs of to-day. The missionary spirit that is distinctive of Christianity is essentially universal. This is involved in the nature of the message. There is nothing for any man unless there is something for every man in the Gospel of the Love of God. It is impossible to think the thoughts we have been thinking together here in relation to anything less than the entire human race.

"From the very outset," says Professor Harnack, "Christianity came forward with a spirit of universalism, by dint of which it laid hold of *the entire life of man* in all its functions, throughout its heights and depths, in all its feelings, thoughts and actions. This guaranteed its triumphs. . . . From the very first it embraced humanity and the world."<sup>1</sup>

The movements of the last century, by which the world has been drawn into a closer unity than ever before serve to give added emphasis to

<sup>1</sup> *Expansion of Christianity*, Vol. II., p. 145.

the demand for a truly universal religion. Quite apart from theoretical considerations, there is a practical necessity of finding some higher ground on which the races and nations may meet without perpetual strife.

The last century, and especially the last generation, has witnessed movements in Asia and Africa, whose full bearing is even now only beginning to be realised by thoughtful men and women in the West. More than half the human race is affected by the quickening of new life, the economic development, the educational movement in these continents. Wholly new ideas have entered into the lives of multitudes. These new ideas have had no time to work themselves out. The republicanism of China seems a very superficial and possibly a transient phenomenon; the nationalist movement in India, and the Ethiopian movement in Africa, leave untouched very many of the simpler and less educated people. But new ideas have an astonishing way of disturbing the whole order into which they are introduced. It is very much easier to start them on their way than to check their progress once they are started. Asia is in process of change, and even if the change be very much slower than some had expected, it will not

for that reason be less profound—perhaps rather it may be the more far-reaching in its effects. If the religious life of man is the deepest thing in his nature, if intercourse with the living God be the true end of man, and if there be in all men the potentiality for such intercourse, it is high time that we shared with the East not only our wealth, our scientific inventions and our political systems and ideals, but that we brought to her also the riches of the spirit that are made available to us in Christ. It may be said that we need a more adequate conception of God ourselves and a more thorough application of Christian principles in our own life, before we attempt to share our religion with the East. I think we have said this already far too often. Is it not possible that in sharing that which we have we may ourselves be enriched, and that the path towards that truer conception of God we so greatly need is to be found in going forth to share what we have? Light shall yet break on our problems from the East, as we are faithful in putting at her disposal our own treasures.

“We stand,” said Dr. Cuthbert Hall in 1906, ‘on the border of a new age, when great reconstructions in world-relations are imminent.

. . . In these reconstructions the initiative of the East shall be felt in ways undreamed of by our fathers. The East shall come to its own again, and speak in the councils of the world. Time, the great restorer of postponed inheritances, the great adjuster of equities, shall summon the East, not to the recrudescence of old conflicts, but to new rivalries of the mind and of the spirit. The day of her visitation, the hour of her opportunity, shall come from God. Shall she know that day and be ready for that hour? The answer to that question is bound up in another: Shall the Oriental consciousness place its sublime qualities at the service of Jesus Christ, and become unto the twentieth century what she was unto the first, a Prophet of the Highest? "

It is for us to see to it that the East has the chance of thus finding Christ, and laying her gifts once more at His feet. The alternative would seem to open out untold possibilities of evil. Already the spirit of materialism and militarism is getting a grip on the East. Already she is being drawn into European conflicts and rivalries. Dismay and despair seize us as we think of the future, unless we are able to conceive of some higher unity. The Christian conception

of the Kingdom of God contains within itself the one hopeful line of solution.

"If there can be such a thing as a common national good, there must be also an international good, a universal good. If there be not such a good, what becomes of the claim of Christianity to be a universal religion? Every universal religion contains within itself the implicit possibility of an international *concordat*; but, if we eliminate the religious factor from our analysis of the present situation and forecast of the future, the outlook is dreary indeed. . . . They can neither measure the past nor forecast the future who believe that religion is a spent force in the life of mankind, or who assume that God has wrought His greatest deeds in the past of human history."<sup>1</sup>

It almost seems to-day as if Christianity as a universal religion had utterly broken down. It is not, I maintain, Christianity that has failed, but we who have so misunderstood and misrepresented it. But the kind of Christianity that is to conquer the world must be something very different from that which has too

<sup>1</sup> *Christianity in the Modern World*, by D. S. Cairns, pp. 295, 304.

often passed under that name. We simply must find our way back to the living God. We must sit again at the feet of Christ. Once again we may say, as we look out on the world, "the eager expectancy of creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God." The world is in desperate need. But even the most poignant sense of that need cannot give us the missionary spirit. We must be driven back to find again that inward power which will be for us nothing less than a new birth : we must receive not the spirit of bondage again unto fear, but the spirit of adoption whereby we cry Abba, Father.

Words fail to describe the possibilities of these momentous days. One socialist writer says :

"The hopes which have been struggling for expression for a century past, the great frustrate ideas and dreams, are out in the open for us to-day. To a world, sick with hope of human happiness deferred, they had come to seem utopian, unattainable in the face of old settled habits and apparently unshakeable interests. To us the door of opportunity has been suddenly opened. The barriers which seemed insuperable have been thrown down by stupendous events beyond our reckoning, by the rocking of a world ; as if some titanic providence, grown impatient at our hesitation to clear the ground for ourselves, had shaken the old order into ruin to compel us to action. We have to rebuild now in any case. Shall we rebuild the old evils ? Or make a world of it which shall be worth the price we are paying for the opportunity ? "1

1 *The New Faith*, by Fred Henderson, p. 113.

We are as men who, after climbing all night through tempest and darkness, at last find themselves nearing the summit of some lofty peak as the first streaks of dawn herald the coming of the sun. Faint yet expectant they press on, knowing that, when once they reach the summit, and the sun rises, there will break upon their vision a prospect of surpassing beauty and grandeur. Their eyes, trained to the darkness, must accustom themselves to the new light which is arising. Their weary limbs take fresh life as they near the end of their long climb. But what if, when the dawn comes, the eyes, so long accustomed to the night, are blinded by the rising sun ?

Surely He cometh, and a thousand voices  
 Call to the saints, and to the deaf are dumb ;  
 Surely He cometh, and the earth rejoices,  
 Glad in His coming, who hath sworn, I come.

When the Lord of Glory dwelt among men there were many who passed by on the other side. Rulers in Church and State alike failed to see Him. They cast Him forth as a traitor, and a public nuisance.

To-day men are being forced back behind the half-truths and conventionalities that have satisfied them too long, and are being com-

pelled to face the stern realities of life and death. May we be given eyes to see the Eternal God who is more real and present than all the clash of warring interests, and all the powers of Church and State.

It is this vision we need beyond all others. If our Church, or any Church, is to be a power in the world it must be possessed by the missionary spirit. In fact the Church is, in essence, a body of persons who have a message to give, and the larger the number of such persons the more effective the Church will be. This is no day for a Church without a message. It is not a day for traditionalism, for form and ritual and dogma. It is a day when men demand the real thing, and will be satisfied with nothing less. It is a day when, unless we have some actual experience of God in the soul we had better be silent. It is a day when shams and half-truths must be exposed and shattered. The missionaries of this age will not be those who say, "I have been told so," but those who can boldly proclaim the truths they have themselves discovered. They may be simple, humble men and women. They may not have any outstanding gifts. None of us need despair of being included in the "family of prophets."

But one priceless possession we must have. It is a possession within the reach of all. We turn again from all our talk of problems and principles. We wait in silence before the living God. We are little children again. We know the Father. We gather round the feet of His dear Son who laid down His own life for us. We find ourselves one with our brethren in the family of God. We dare not, we would not, we cannot withhold the service we can render. There is one gift we hold of greater worth than all else. That gift we offer with great joy. The giving of it means nothing less than the giving of ourselves. When we have so given, the gift may be spurned or ignored. We may be treated as impertinent or as imbeciles. Our best treasure may seem to be squandered on some worthless wretch. But we must go on giving, and here and there we shall find those in whose eyes a new light shines, who have caught for themselves the music of the stars, who have entered with great gladness into the Father's house. Then shall all the toil and waste be repaid to us an hundred-fold. We shall have found our brother in a new and deeper way, and in doing so we shall again have found our Lord. In no high-sounding words,

not mainly in great meetings, shall the missionary spirit meet the present opportunity, but as one by one men and women are brought into the very presence of God, and make for themselves the supreme discovery. The simple, loving service by which the inward experience is shared, is of all others the means by which we may build on earth the beautiful city of God.

I close by recalling the summons to universal service that went forth from George Fox in Launceston Prison, words that sounded as a trumpet-call to the early Friends, and that come to us with peculiar freshness, at a time when once again the prisons are being filled with men who have chosen to obey God rather than men.

“Let all nations hear the sound by word or writing. Spare no place, spare no tongue nor pen, but be obedient to the Lord God; go through the work; be valiant for the truth upon earth; and tread and trample upon all that is contrary. . . . Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come, that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Journal* i., p. 315.





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